

Sustainable Economic Development Advisory Committee (SEDAC)
Minutes
May 10, 8:30 AM
Office of Economic Development

Members present: Jacqueline Grant, Brian Moore, Chuck Tessier, Bruce Tompkins, Pam Turner

Members absent: Becky Anderson, Ray Bailey, Gene Bell, Robin Cape, Carol King, David McConville, Lewis Lankford, Matthew Raker

Staff: Sam Powers, Brenda Mills, Stephanie Monson, Ed Vess, Cathy Ball, Chad Pierce, Janet Dack

Guests: Jim Fox, Walter Rone, Greg Walker-Wilson

Quorum: A quorum was not present.

Minutes

A quorum was not present, so the March and April minutes were not discussed at the meeting. They will be presented for approval at the June meeting.

Asheville-Buncombe Flood Reduction Task Force

Chairman Tessier introduced the discussion. At the April meeting, there was consensus to focus on the river, as the river has been and can be even more of a major growth area. The river is interconnected to flooding issues, transportation issues, recreation, economic development and job creation, and the arts. Therefore, all steps taken need to be an integration of a number of objectives involving all of the affected issues. Staff was invited to the May meeting to present the information they plan to take to City Council at their June 12th meeting. Chad Pierce made the presentation. (Following are excerpts from the powerpoint presentation. Upon request, a copy of the entire presentation can be forwarded by email.)

Background of the Asheville-Buncombe Flood Reduction Task Force:

- Easiest way to reduce flood damage is to not have people or property in harm's way
- This is very difficult to do in the Swannanoa Basin
- Historically, we have built along the river because that is the accessible land and the most easily traversed (compared to mountainsides)
- Census data indicates that there will be a 36% increase in population in Buncombe County over the next 30 years, so there will be continued pressure to build in the floodplain
- *Historical data shows that five major flooding events have occurred (1916, 1928, 1941, 1972 and 2004)*

Mission:

Establish a regional approach and long-range plan for flood damage reduction, floodplain protection and watershed management. By basing the approach and plan on best management models, which

integrate objectives of flood control, transportation, economic development, land use and community planning, recreation and environmental preservation.

Approach:

- Analyze strategies to reduce flood levels
- Study strategies to minimize all flood impacts
- Analyze current development patterns and its impact
- Review current flood, redevelopment, transportation and other studies
- Make recommendations to City Council.

The Process:

Over the past 6 months the Flood Reduction Task Force has heard from subject matter experts on a broad spectrum of topics in order better understand strategies to accomplish their mission.

Task Force Members have taken ideas from these presentations and begun to formulate recommendations that will accomplish their mission.

The Flood Damage Reduction Task Force will present the recommendations to Asheville City Council on June 12th 2007

Recommendations Tied to Three Themes:

- Keep it Out
 - Low impact development
 - Stormwater management
 - Reduction in impervious surface and steep slope development
- Slow it Down
 - Retention, reservoir, impoundments
 - Channel and Conveyance Improvements
 - Other Engineered and Structural Improvements
- Get Out of the Way
 - “Smart” Development in flood hazard zone
 - Encourage removal of flood-prone structures
 - Education and Outreach
 - Emergency Response and Warning System

Summary:

- Reduce impact of flooding “inch by inch”
- We are all connected by the watershed and need to “share in the pain” and the solution. That is why we need a regional approach.
- We must be proactive now
 - Projections show County growing by 30,000 in next 20 years, putting even more people and property in harms way

- Severity of climate change will increase chance of severe flooding in our area
- We cannot continue with current development plan

Discussion followed, with Mr. Tompkins asking for more details regarding the \$4.6 million Senate Bill 7 funds. Chad Pierce indicated that the City of Asheville is the project manager of the monies. Emergency Management has been given \$50,000 to remove debris from Tunnel Road to Biltmore Village. They are also negotiating for two properties that will have a major impact on the Wilma Dykeman Riverway and RiverLink plans. Mr. Pierce also shared that they are looking for FEMA to match some of the funds, thus bringing in more dollars for the project.

Ms. Turner voiced her concerns over the Biltmore Village bridge rebuild by DOT, which was then discussed at length. The only benefits to the river flow will be single span, vs. a double span, bridge. The obstacle to further benefits are two pieces of property on which buildings stand that had to be completely replaced after the floods in 2004. Cathy Ball acknowledged that, in 2004, there were no City Ordinances in place to discourage rebuilding; that these City Ordinances contradict the plans of the Task Force. Cathy Ball shared that the City had requested that the temporary bridge built while the original bridge is replaced remain, but the request was denied. Brian Moore brought up the issues of eminent domain and public safety, with regards to the City working with DOT to evolve a plan for Storm Water control that is reasonable for all parties involved. Jim Foxx emphasized that all pieces need to fit together for (future build-outs, land use and sustainable economic development) for Flood Water Control.

Cathy Ball informed the Committee that the Asheville-Buncombe Flood Reduction Task Force will present their recommendations to City Council at their June 12th meeting.

HUB Project Update:

Mr. Powers informed the committee that on May 22nd, City Council will hear a presentation to educate Council on HUB. Councilwoman Cape, Mayor Bellamy, and City Manager Jackson are on the HUB CEDA. Council will look at the advent of HUB, and discuss how SEDAC fits into the project. SEDAC needs to be clear on how to assist the Council PED committee and how to help with the HUB project.

Chairman Tessier asked that the agenda for the City Council meeting on May 22 be forwarded to the group as soon as it becomes available so that the group will know the approximate time of City Council hearing the HUB presentation.

Other:

Mr. Powers also presented to the group an Op/Ed article from the Tuesday, May 8, 2007, edition of the Wall Street Journal, "The Realignment of America," discussing population growth and realignment.

Adjourned: 9:35 a.m.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, June 14, 2007 - 8:30 AM
Economic Development Office, 29 Haywood Street

Minutes prepared by: Janet Dack